Written by Chiara Lubich
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“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”
(Jn 4:13–14)

In this “pearl” of the Gospel, Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman near Jacob’s well, he speaks of water as the simplest of elements, but one that proves to be the most desired, the most vital for whoever is familiar with the desert. No great explanations were needed to convey the importance of water.

Well water is for our natural life, whereas the living water that Jesus is speaking of is for eternal life.

Just as the desert blooms only after an abundant rainfall, similarly the seeds buried in us at baptism can bud forth only if sprinkled with the word of God. Then the plant grows, giving off new shoots and shapes that become a tree or a lovely flower, all because it receives the living water of the word of God, which gives it life and preserves it for eternity.

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Jesus’ words are addressed to all of us who are thirsty in this world: to those who are conscious of their spiritual aridity and who still suffer thirst, and to those who are not even aware of the need to drink from the fountain of true life and of the great values of humanity.

Jesus is actually extending an invitation to all men and women today, revealing where we can find the answer to our questions and the fulfillment of all our desires. It is up to us, therefore, to draw from his words, to let ourselves be imbued with his message.

How? By re-evangelizing our life, measuring it against his words, trying to think with the mind of Jesus and to love with his heart.

Every moment in which we seek to live the Gospel is like drinking a drop of that living water. Every gesture of love for our neighbor is like a sip of that water.

Yes, because that water, which is so alive and precious, has something special about it. It wells up within us each time we open our hearts to others. It’s a wellspring of God that gives water to us in the measure in which it flows out from us to quench the thirst of others through small or big acts of love.

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We've understood: to avoid suffering thirst, we must give to others the living water within ourselves that we draw from him.

Very little is needed — at times a word, a smile, a simple gesture of solidarity, to give us a renewed sense of fulfillment, of profound satisfaction, a surge of joy. And if we continue to give, this fountain of peace and life will pour out water evermore abundantly and will never dry up.

Jesus revealed to us yet another secret, a kind of bottomless well from which we can draw. When two or three are united in his name, by loving one another with his very own love, he is in their midst (see Mt 18:20). And it is then that we are free, that we are one, full of light, with rivers of living water flowing from within us (see Jn 7:38). It is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise, because it is from Jesus himself, present in our midst, that thirst-quenching water wells up for eternity.

- Chiara Lubich

Each month a Scripture passage is offered as a guide and inspiration for daily living. This commentary, translated into 96 different languages and dialects, reaches several million people worldwide through print, radio, television and the Internet. Ever since the Focolare's beginnings, founder Chiara Lubich (1920–2008) wrote her commentaries each month. This one was originally published in March 2002.

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Read more:

- Judith M. Povilus, United in His Name , New City Press, 1992.

- Fr. Pasquale Foresi, “Jesus in the Midst,” in New Humanity Review , n.14, Living City.
- Leahy, Brendan, “Movements and Evangelization,” Ecclesial Movements and Communities , New City Press, 2011, pp109–118.

Next month:
October 2012
“But at your command I will lower the nets” (Lk. 5:5)